DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 164 972 08 CE 019 562

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TITLE An Equal Chance. A Parent's Introduction to Sex Fairness in Vocational Education.
INSTITUTION National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, Washington, D.C. Resource Center on Sex Roles in Education.
SPONS AGENCY Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 78
CONTRACT 300-76-0426
NOTE 24p.
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (Stock Number 017-080-01863-2)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; *Equal Education; Federal Legislation; Guides; *Parent Responsibility; Parents; School Responsibility; *Sex Discrimination; Sex Stereotypes; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

This booklet was developed to introduce parents to sex fairness in vocational education. First, it presents the pictures of two women and two men and explains why they are enrolled in their particular vocational education programs. It then asks parents to consider whether they can see their daughters and sons in occupations nontraditional to their sex. These questions are followed by some statistics regarding women's work force participation, including wages. Next, the implications of these facts for both daughters and sons are discussed. Then follows a discussion of the current enrollment of men and women in vocational education programs which are not traditional for their sex. The concluding portion of this booklet discusses the things parents can do to help their children overcome stereotyping and help schools provide equal opportunity. (EM)

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An Equal Chance CE

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A Parent's Introduction to Sex Fairness in Vocational Education

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Ann S. is completing an auto mechanics training program in her high school. She will earn $8.00 an hour when she begins her job in a local auto repair shop.

Carlos R. is taking courses to become a licensed practical nurse. He left his job as a bookkeeper because he wants to work with people.

Ernestine B., the mother of four, has returned to the technical school in her community to train to become an environmental technician. She is developing new skills and will soon be able to contribute to her family's income.

Joe B. is taking a course in child development. He wants to make sure that he is prepared to be a good father to the children he hopes to have.

Can you see your daughter as:

? an auto mechanic

? an environmental technician

? a draftsperson

? a machinist

? a mother working for pay outside the home to support her family

Can you see your son as:

? a practical nurse

? a florist

? an airline flight attendant

? a secretary

? a father with full responsibility for the care of his children

Before you answer, consider the following facts:

Women from all groups in our country are entering the paid work force in ever increasing numbers.

- By the year 2,000, if not before, men and women will be participating in the work force in approximately equal numbers; today women are 41 percent of the paid work force.

- 9 out of 10 girls now in high school will work for pay outside the home for some period in their lives; 6 out of 10 will work full-time outside their homes for at least 30 years.

- 47 percent of all married couples in the U.S. are now composed of a husband and a wife both working for pay outside the home.

- Mothers of children under six are entering the work force at a more rapid rate than any other group: nearly 40 percent of mothers with children under six now work for pay outside the home.

Women are working for pay because of economic need.

- 68 percent of all women working for pay today work because of economic need; they support themselves or their families, or they supplement the incomes of their husbands who earn $9,999 or less annually.

- 4 out of 10 young women now in high school will become heads of families; they will be the sole support of themselves and their children.

Women in the paid work force are concentrated in low-paying "women's jobs."

- Women working for pay full-time year round earn only 57 cents for every dollar earned by men working full-time year round.

- The median earnings of employed women with four years of college education are less than those of employed men with eight years of education.

- The largest number of employed women work in clerical occupations; the average yearly salary of women in clerical jobs is $6,827. The next largest group of women are employed as service workers; their average yearly income is $5,046. The largest number of men are employed as craft workers; their average yearly earnings are $12,028. The second largest group of men are employed as operatives; their average yearly earnings are $10,176.

For any person to be refused a job or treated differently in a job because of her or his sex or race is illegal. Equal employment opportunity laws now prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, race, and national origin.

What are the implications of these facts for:

Your Daughter?

The chances are high that your daughter will be in the paid work force for a significant portion of her life (40 years if she is single, 30 years if she marries but has no children, and 15-25 years if she has children). The chances are also high that she will be working for pay to support herself and her family.

Your daughter should not be limited to low-paying or dead-end jobs. She should consider and select from the full range of jobs which exist today, not just those which in the past were stereotyped as "women's jobs." Young women must select and train for work which suits their interests and needs, work which can provide them economic security and personal satisfaction.

Young women should also make certain that they gain some of the basic home maintenance skills they may need as independent workers or as heads of families. Basic skills in such areas as electrical wiring, plumbing repair, or car maintenance can assist any person, female or male, in day-to-day living.

What are the implications of these facts for:

Your Son?

The chances are high that your son will have a wife who works for pay outside their home. As more and more women are working outside their homes, increasing numbers of men are called upon to assume responsibilities for child care, food preparation, and home maintenance. If your son is the one man in every three whose marriage ends in divorce, or if his wife becomes ill or disabled, this responsibility may be total.

Young men should prepare now not only for work outside the home but also work within the home and family.

One benefit of equal employment opportunity legislation has been for men who have chosen to move into job areas which have traditionally been stereotyped as "women's jobs." For example, many young men have chosen to move into jobs as flight attendants or as day care workers because these jobs suit their interests and abilities. Your son should consider the full range of work possibilities as he selects and prepares for an occupation.

Our daughters &sons

should begin now to develop the skills they will need to survive:

- skills for meaningful paid work outside the home — for providing for themselves and others economically.

- skills for meaningful work inside the home — for caring for themselves and others physically.

- skills which are consistent with their own interests and needs rather than stereotyped ideas of "women's work" and "men's work."

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place to begin is in
vocational education
programs.

It used to be that vocational education programs offered home economics and secretarial courses for girls and crafts and trade courses for boys. Girls were prepared to be homemakers or to work for pay briefly before marriage. Boys were prepared to work outside the home in jobs that were understood to be "for men only." Both females and males were taught stereotypes.

Today, things are beginning to change. By law, all vocational education schools and programs must admit females and males without discriminating on the basis of sex. Many schools are now developing programs to recruit students into areas of vocational education which are not traditional for their sex. Many are designing special activities to overcome sex stereotyping in employment and vocational education and to provide equal opportunities for all students, female and male.

Some changes in vocational education enrollments have occurred already. Today:

11% of the students studying agriculture are women.

21% of the students preparing for health careers as nurses, medical technicians, and laboratory workers are men.

25% of the students preparing for careers in secretarial and clerical positions are men.

13% of the students preparing for careers in trades and industry are women.

These figures indicate that in recent years both females and males have begun to move into programs which are not traditional for their sex. The movement of boys and men into these nontraditional areas has been more rapid than the movement of girls and women. Today, 39 percent of all females enrolled in vocational education programs are enrolled in nongainful home economics. These programs provide valuable personal skills, but they do not prepare students to compete in the paid work force.

As parents, we need to encourage our children, particularly our daughters, to take advantage of the range of vocational educational opportunities now open to them. We need to encourage our children to prepare for futures which are not limited by stereotypes.

As parents, we can make sure that our children have the facts:

That our daughters understand that they will probably be working for pay outside their homes for a significant portion of their lives

That our sons realize that, if they marry, they will probably be married to women working for pay outside their homes and that they will need to contribute to or be responsible for caring for children, for the home, and for family physical needs

That our daughters and sons recognize the variety and range of paid work which is available to them, and the duties, requirements, and pay which accompany various jobs

That our daughters and sons are aware of the educational programs which can help them to choose and prepare for rewarding work both outside and inside the home

That our daughters and sons know the costs that stereotyping can have on their lives and the ways that they can overcome stereotyping

As parents, we can make sure that our children know their rights:

It is illegal for any person to be kept out of schools, classes, or jobs because of her/his race, national origin, handicap, or sex, or to be treated or paid differently because of race, national origin, handicap, or sex once admitted to schools, classes, or jobs.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act makes it illegal for schools which receive Federal funds to discriminate on the basis of race or national origin in the admission or treatment of students.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 makes it illegal for schools which receive Federal funds to discriminate on the basis of sex in the admission or treatment of students, or in most employment practices.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act makes it illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, or sex in most employment practices.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 makes it illegal for schools and employers receiving Federal funds to discriminate on the basis of handicap in the admission or treatment of students, or in most employment practices.

Our daughters and sons are entitled to receive fair consideration for admission to any education or job training program they select and for hiring in any job for which they are qualified.

As parents, we can influence our children's schools. We can:

Talk to our children's teachers to learn more about vocational education programs and efforts to eliminate discrimination and bias

Talk to their counselors and find out how counseling efforts help students explore the range of jobs and opportunities that are open to them

Talk to the school principal about our concern that discrimination and bias are eliminated

Talk to the school librarian to learn what efforts have been made to provide nonstereotyped books and career materials

Meet with members of the local advisory council on vocational education and ask them about programs that are being developed to eliminate discrimination and bias

Organize community and parent action groups to work with schools to provide equal opportunity

As parents, we can encourage our children's schools to:

Help our children become aware of and explore new career choices

Provide our children with career counseling and career planning services

Ensure that our children are treated fairly and with equal opportunity for vocational education regardless of their sex or race

Support our children when they choose nontraditional vocations

We can insist that:

1. The law is obeyed in school policies, programs, and practices
2. Students' rights are protected
3. Equal opportunity is provided

We have a right to information and help related to equal opportunity in vocational education.

Every school district or institution of vocational education which receives Federal funds must have a Title IX coordinator who can provide information and assistance related to equal opportunity for females and males. Parents who have questions or who believe that their children have not been given equal opportunity should contact their Title IX coordinator.

All states must have at least one employee who works to overcome sex bias in the vocational education programs in the state. Parents may request information or assistance by writing to this person at their state vocational education agency. This agency may be reached by writing to the capitol building in each state.

As parents, we can help
our children to overcome stereotyping and our
schools to provide equal opportunity.
We can make a difference in our children's future.
We can help give our children
an equal chance.

Discrimination Prohibited

No person in the United States, shall on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, or be so treated on the basis of sex under most education programs or activities receiving Federal assistance.

This publication was prepared by Martha Matthews and Shirley McCune of the Resource Center on Sex Roles in Education, National Foundation for the Improvement of Education. It was prepared under contract #300760426 for the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgement in the conduct of the project. Points of view stated, do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.